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REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

Locoweed
POISONING

in the
Western States



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES from in the Western States

Locoweeds POISONING

Horses, cattle, sheep, and goats may be poisoned by feeding on locoweeds.

"Locoed" horses seldom recover completely, and are of little value as saddle and work animals. Cattle being fed for beef after apparent recovery rarely make economic gains. Calf losses caused by abortion are frequently high.

Animals ordinarily will not eat locoweeds unless feed is scarce. But some acquire the "loco habit," and may continue to feed on these plants even when good forage is available.

The term "locoweeds" refers to certain plants in the pea family. Listed below are some of the more poisonous species.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Distribution
White loco	<i>Oxytropis lambertii</i>	Montana and North Dakota, south to Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas
Purple, or woolly, loco	<i>Astragalus mollissimus</i>	South Dakota to western Texas to New Mexico
Blue loco	<i>A. lentiginosus</i>	Eastern Washington to Nevada and California
Bigbend loco	<i>A. earlei</i>	Western Texas and southern New Mexico
Western loco	<i>A. wootoni</i>	Eastern Arizona, southern New Mexico, and south-western Texas
Poison vetch	<i>A. miser</i> var. <i>oblongifolius</i>	Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado

Locoweeds are poisonous during all stages of growth, and may be dangerous throughout the year—

even when the plants have matured and dried. All plant parts are toxic.

Where and When It Grows

These plants are commonly found on foothills and plains, and in semi-arid areas. They start growth in

late fall, in winter, or in early spring, depending on the locality and species.



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Locoweeds grow in tufts or clumps from large roots. They have compound leaves and pealike flowers, which may be white, blue, or purple, depending on the species.

The plants are mostly perennials, and are called locoweeds because of the "crazy" behavior sometimes exhibited by poisoned animals.

How It Affects Livestock

Usually an animal must eat considerable quantities of locoweeds for several months before death occurs. Symptoms of poisoning may

not appear until several weeks after the plants are eaten.

Abortion frequently occurs in cattle.

Symptoms of locoweed poisoning

1. Loss of flesh
2. Irregularity of gait
3. Loss of sense of direction
4. Nervousness
5. Weakness
6. Withdrawing from other animals
7. Lack of muscular control
8. May react violently when disturbed

LOCOWEED DISTRIBUTION



How To Reduce Livestock Losses

Livestock owners can reduce losses by keeping animals off locoweed ranges until good forage is available.

Treatment is not effective in locoweed poisoning. Eradicating plants in large areas is not practicable. In

small areas, locoweeds have been eradicated experimentally. Partial success has been obtained by grubbing, and by treating the plants with a herbicide, such as 2,4,5-T. To be effective, eradication must be continued 3 to 5 years.

Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more information on locoweed poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local veterinarian

if you have any questions regarding affected animals. *Note:* The map above shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that locoweed grows in areas other than those indicated on the map.

Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses

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